

REMARKS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the above-mentioned Official Action in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3-7 and 9-24 remain pending in the application, with Claims 1, 7, 12, 13, 23 and 24 being independent and having been amended herein.

Claims 1, 4-7 and 10-24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,838,342 (Takahashi et al.). Claims 3 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Takahashi et al. in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2001/0003458 (Shioya). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Support for the amendments to the claims can be found in the specification at least beginning at page 36, line 19 with regard to the discussion of Figures 9A and 9B. Of course, the claims are not intended to be limited in scope to this preferred embodiment.

In Takahashi et al., the image forming apparatus corrects density unevenness by first forming a test image and then reading the test image to obtain average density data. Using this average density value, a common correction is performed for drive signals for the printing heads.

It is respectfully submitted, however, that Takahashi et al. does not disclose or suggest at least estimating, for each nozzle, a degree of influence which affects a density of an image at a position of a dot to be formed by an ink droplet ejected from the nozzle, with the degree of influence being affected by both the nozzle corresponding to the position of the dot to be formed and another nozzle in a neighborhood of the nozzle, and obtaining the degree of influence by obtaining a dot area, present within a target area, of the dot formed by an ink droplet ejected from a nozzle corresponding to a predetermined position of the dot and a dot area, present within the target area, of the dot formed by an ink droplet ejected from the other nozzle, based on an amount of deviation corresponding to each of the plurality of nozzles, as is recited in independent Claims 1 and 7.

Nor does Takahashi et al. disclose or suggest performing dot deviation correction by obtaining a dot area, present within a target area, of a dot formed by an ink droplet ejected from a nozzle corresponding to a predetermined position of the dot and a dot area, present within the target area, of the dot formed by an ink droplet ejected from another nozzle, based on an amount of deviation corresponding to each of the plurality of nozzles, as is recited in independent Claims 12, 13, 23 and 24.

Accordingly, Takahashi et al. fails to disclose or suggest important features of the present invention recited in the independent claims.

Shioya describes an ink jet recording apparatus and method that can either perform a complementary printing process or adjust an amount of ink depending on the magnitude of the difference between intended image data and read image data. However, Shioya is not believed to remedy the deficiencies of Takahashi et al. noted above with respect to the independent claims.

Thus, independent Claims 1, 7, 12, 13, 23 and 24 are patentable over the citations of record. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the §§ 102 and 103 rejections are respectfully requested.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the present invention is patentably defined by independent Claims 1, 7, 12, 13, 23 and 24. Dependent Claims 3-6, 9-11 and 14-22 are also allowable, in their own right, for defining features of the present invention in addition to those recited in their respective independent claims. Individual consideration of the dependent claims is requested.

This Amendment After Final Rejection is an earnest attempt to advance prosecution and reduce the number of issues, and is believed to clearly place this application in condition for allowance. This Amendment was not earlier presented because Applicants earnestly believed that the prior Amendment placed the subject application in condition for allowance. Accordingly, entry of this Amendment under 37 CFR 1.116 is respectfully requested.

Applicants submit that the present application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the objection and rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action, and an early Notice of Allowability are requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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